

Abstract of the Invention

The present invention provides a method of classifying defects, comprising the steps of: inspecting a sample to detect defects; acquiring an image of the detected defects; extracting feature amounts of the defects from the acquired defect image; and classifying said detected defects with a defect classifier that uses the acquired feature amount information about the defects; wherein said classifier has a decision tree for hierarchically expanding defect class elements via branch elements, and wherein classification rules are individually set for said branch elements.